

# THE CROSS OF CHRIST AND THE SWASTIKA

GERHARD  
HAHN

# The Cross of Christ and the Swastika



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The cross of Christ and the swastika do not need to **oppose each other**, and must not do so, but rather they can and should stand **together**. One should not dominate the other, but rather each should maintain its own meaning and significance.

The cross of Christ points toward heaven and admonishes us:

**Remember that you are Christian people**, carried by the eternal love of the heavenly father, free through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, sanctified by the power of God's spirit.

The swastika, however, points to the world as a divine creation and admonishes us:

Remember that you are German, born in German territory to parents of German blood, filled with the German spirit and essence, formed according to German nature.

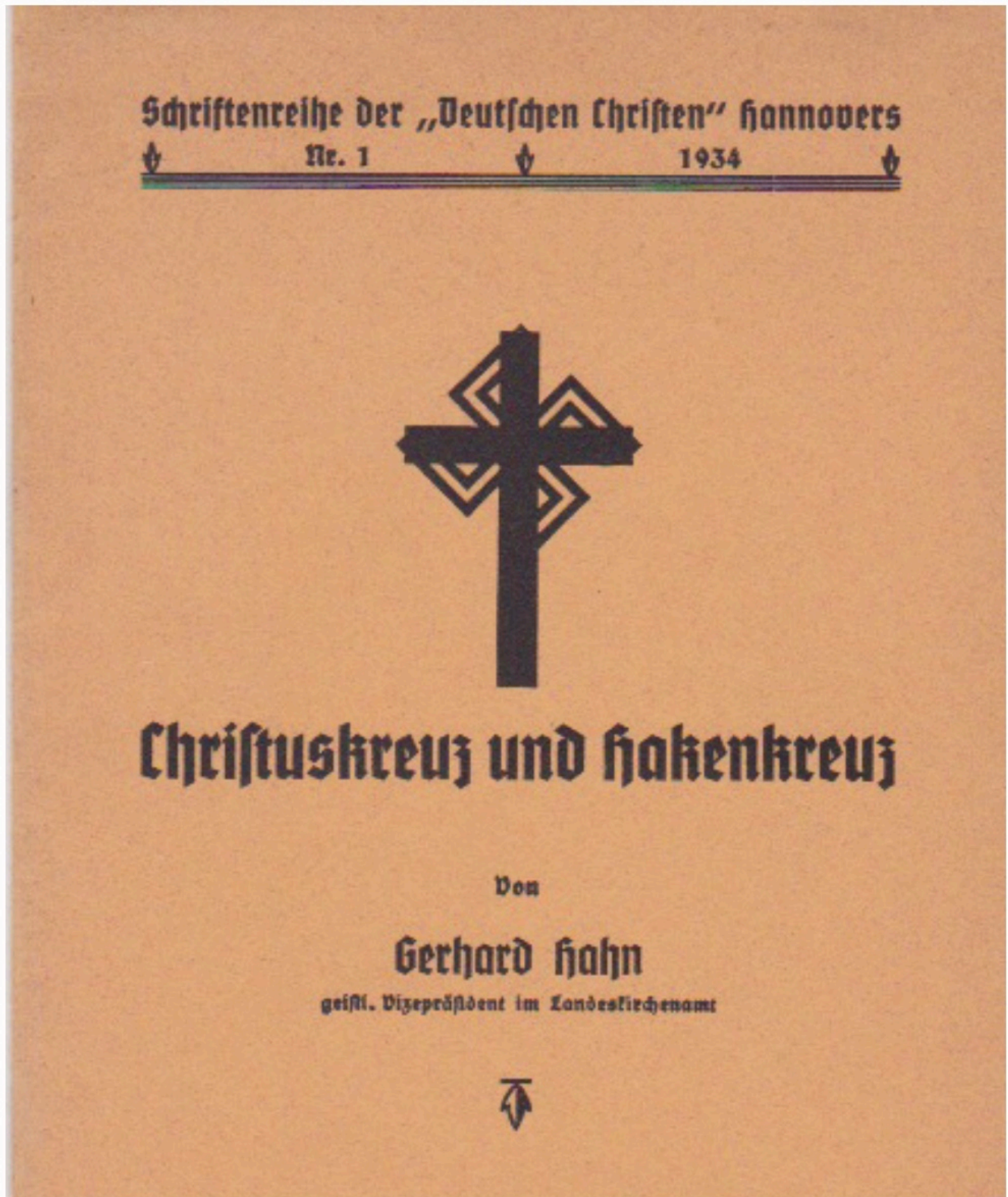
Both together, however, the cross of Christ and the swastika, admonish us:

Remember that you are **German Christian people** and should become ever more **whole German Christian people**, and remain so!

Hanover, Easter 1934. Gerhard Hahn, President of the Provincial Church Council (*Landeskirchentag*)



The church elections in summer 1933 have shown that in the Hanoverian provincial church, the overwhelming majority of church members affirm the “German Christians,” and therefore elected “German Christian” men to church bodies (church boards [*Kirchenvorstände*], county church councils [*Kreiskirchentage*], the provincial church council).



The new provincial church council, according to the constitution, is responsible for leading the provincial church. At first, it consisted of 62 members, of whom 52 belonged to the “German Christian” faction, 8 to the “Gospel and Church” faction. One member of the “German Christians” (representative Meyer-Stirpe) soon switched to the other side, while the appointed member of the provincial church council Mission Director Schomerus-Hermannsburg), joined neither faction, but had no connection to the “German Christians” (he has since resigned). It may not be generally known that of the 45 members **elected** by the districts, 42 are members of the “German Christians.”

Since the “German Christians” in the new provincial council had received over 83% of the votes, they had not only the right, but also the inescapable duty to carry out the will of church members. As leader of the “German Christians,” I had no doubt that:

**The hour had come for the “German Christians” to take on the leadership of our Hanoverian provincial church.**

Indeed, to take it over clearly and with clear goals, which would allow for no half measures or compromises. This was not only consistent with my own desires, but also because the confidence of church members obligated us to do so. We were ready for action and dared leave the judgment of our attitudes and our actions to the Lord of history and the church, to him only and no one else, least of all to those who during our people’s years of battle did not stand by our side. He who wishes to understand the attitudes and actions of the “German Christians” must not forget where we came from and what we carried in our heart.



For the most part, we “German Christians” came out of the great battles of the German struggle for freedom, some fighting for years in the front ranks, on the streets and in meetings. Day and night, we marched at the side of our comrades in brown shirts, were attacked by the hatred of the red mob of satanic Bolshevism and its “bourgeois” allies. We “German Christians” came from the battle for the life and death of our people, we came from the sacrifice of Germany’s youth, from over 300 graves over which the unwritten words of Jesus shined: **“No one has greater love than this, that he gives his life for his friends.”** We came out of a time of restless, selfless struggle for our German people’s comrades and for the soul of the German people, with bitter pain in our hearts because we were not understood, not understood even by many who bore office and responsibility within the church. Lack of understanding was the least we encountered, us pastors who dared to do the unheard of, to put on brown shirts and become active in “politics” (one did not see that our struggle was something entirely different than the politics of the past, and that the National Socialist German Workers’ Party only had the form of a party, but inwardly was, is, and will remain the real breakthrough of the true people’s community). As Christians, we put ourselves then in the middle of Hitler’s German freedom movement because we were convinced that God called us to it and demanded it of us. How many National Socialists back then during the battle against the Satan of Bolshevism waited for a clear word from the church, from those who bore office and responsibility in the church. But — with a few exceptions — we waited in vain; to the contrary, we were accused of being “heathens” or were rejected because our language was too crude or because the hatred of our opponents involved us in fist fights or gun

battles nearly every day. They adopted the viewpoint of the Jewish press, and that of a part of the so-called “bourgeois” press, which always excitedly claimed that the Nazis were to blame for these disturbances and fights! I remember how after one of those bloody Sundays in Altona a pastor reproachfully said to me: “Well, why do you go there when you know that the Reds do not want you?” I was shaken by such lack of understanding, which could not understand that by marching through the “red” streets where German workers lived, we were showing them that we belonged to them, even if several hundred bestial and wild murders lurked on the rooftops.

We went our own lonely way, straight ahead, letting ourselves be accused of being troublemakers or rowdies, or charged with being blasphemers when we proclaimed: We see in Adolf Hitler the Führer sent to us by God (today everyone sees that, and it is probably no longer blasphemy!). But back then? How often was I attacked when I preached in meetings that the cross of Christ and the swastika had to stand together! It was the same with my old fellow fighters Heinrich Meyer-Aurich in East Friesland and Mattiat and Jakobshagen in South Hanover. Still we fought, even if the church often did not understand us, and went our hard way because we felt obligated **as Christians** to our German brothers and sisters. **It was our faith that made battling for and following Hitler a holy “duty.”** We saw with terrifying clarity, without any doubt, that the enemy of the German people, Bolshevism, knew very well that a Soviet Germany could come **only** if it succeeded in separating and removing the German from his faith and his God, destroying, eliminating, or making ridiculous everything holy in the German. Bolshevism’s campaign was satanic on the fronts of politics, the economy, culture, the arts, entertainment, and the press. The battle,



however, could only be decided on the battleground on which Hitler stood; **therefore, we stood by his side.** There were only a few of us from “the realm of the church” who openly stood beside Hitler as believers and fighters. We old fighters thank God with pride that he called us, and opened our hearts to his call.

That is where we “German Christians” came from; one may not forget that. Then one will understand that the “German Christians” cannot limit their activity to correcting a few minor failings in church life, but rather must transform the entire relationship between the church and the people. Thus, our primarily demand:

**The cross of Christ and the swastika must have a positive relationship!**

In other words:

**The church must affirm without reservation** the German people’s community growing out of National Socialism, and at the same time must do everything it can to make up for what has been neglected or ignored in the past!

**The church must affirm without reservation** Adolf Hitler’s total state, the last bulwark against the Satan of Bolshevism. It should not be forgotten that, had it not been for Hitler, we would long since have sunk into Bolshevism, and probably would no longer have had churches and ministers.

**The church must affirm without reservation** the Führer of the National Socialists, Adolf Hitler, the Chancellor of the German Reich. He expects the church to help build the Third Reich, and has proclaimed that National Socialist German Workers’ Party, which now forms the state, wants to stand on

**the foundation of positive Christianity. It is the task of the church to create and provide this foundation. It is the content of the absolute affirmation that the church has to make if it really wants to be a people's church.**

We "German Christians" were firmly resolved to work to see that the church makes this affirmation clearly and unambiguously (that means without reservation). We are also firmly resolved to hold to this affirmation and transform it into action. We will not be diverted from this by anything, including the quarreling of the opposition of today which has still not understood, or does not want to understand, and least of all by the forces of Reaction (regardless of how they may conceal themselves). National Socialists in the province should and must know:

**On 28 August 1933 and 25 October 1933, the church publicly and solemnly spoke its affirmation, and is determined to hold to this affirmation and to carry it out.**

### **28 August 1933**

The 4th provincial church council opened on 28 August 1933 at the Ständehaus in Hanover. In accordance with the wishes of the "German Christians," it began with especially festive ceremonies and took on a unique stamp through the affirmation of the National Socialist people of the church and the affirmation of the church of the National Socialist people. In other words: **The opening of the provincial church council became a new experience for church members, since for the first time on 28 August 1933, publicly and solemnly, the cross of Christ and the swastika were placed next to each other in a positive way.**



The church council customarily opens with a public worship service, which took place this time in the Market Church, the biggest church in Hanover. The service began at noon; long before, the big church was **filled to overflowing**, so that many people's comrades could not gain admittance (proof, by the way, that the **new** call of the church was understood by the **new** Germany). On both sides of the altar were the many flags of the S.A., the H.J., the Stahlhelm, and the youth federations. Besides the members of the provincial church council, the church senate, and church offices, the whole church council of Hanover participated in the service. Many government offices had representatives. The rest of the church was packed with many hundreds of people's comrades from the city and countryside.



The church service began with the hymn "Praise the Lord, Oh My Soul" The general superintendent of the Stahlhelm led the liturgy. After the song "If God is for me, All Else May Be against Me," Provincial Bishop D. Marahrens preached a sermon on these words of Jesus: "He who confesses me before men will I

also confess before my heavenly father. He who denies me to men will I also deny before my heavenly father.” Referring to the extraordinarily large attendance at the service, the preacher asked if the joyful readiness of so many meant that that the powerful missionary urge of the church might meet a searching call of the nation in the new age. If that were to happen, it would require the efforts of many to rebuild the church in the right way. Only **that** rebuilding of the church with an unambiguous and clear foundation would meet the longings of our people and our fatherland. None other than Jesus Christ, the Savior who died for humanity, stands in the center of this confession. Referring to eternity and its just judgment, the sermon concluded that the church must be a **“daring church”**, daring in the sense that we, out of love for our people, and convinced of the truth of the Gospel, must put this complete and eternal message in support of the new age.

The organ thundered as the participants left the service and marched solemnly from the Market Church to the Ständehaus. The S.S. was at the head, followed by the S.A. band, then the banners. They were followed by the members of the church senate, the general superintendent, the representatives of government agencies, the members of the provincial church council, the members, officials, and employees of the provincial church administration the invited guests, the clergy and church officers of Hanover, the youth organizations with their banners, as well as units of the S.A. and the Stahlhelm. The bells of all the churches rang as the procession passed through Hanover’s streets. In honor of the church celebration, most buildings were decorated with the swastika flags of the National Socialist revolution. Behind the columns of the S.A. and S.S. that lined the streets, thousands of people saluted the procession with joyful shouts of “Heil!” And throughout the entire province of Hanover, bells tolled thanks and praise to the Lord God.



The Ständehaus was decorated with the church's flags with the cross, Hitler's swastika, and the glorious flags of black-white-red. A large crowd gathered of those who wanted to participate in the solemn ceremony. The S.A. band played the "Netherlands Hymn of Praise," then the crowd sang "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." Then Provincial Bishop D. Marahrens spoke. Among other things, he said: As never before in the history of the people, the individual is bound to the whole of the people, which the Lutheran provincial church in Hanover joyfully affirms. A full and strong affirmation of its ethnicity, of the purity and path it followed, an affirmation of the Reich and its freedom and honor, an affirmation of the state it serves loyally and with devotion. As part of the German Evangelical Church, the Lutheran Provincial Church in Hanover could demonstrate great service to the people. As the church of God, it had the best that the world has, it had what a people with deep roots must have for its life, and it had what the Führer of our people had to have for his people and his work. Unrestricted in its proclamation of the Gospel and unlimited in the freedom of its witness, it gave the people and its Führer the greatest possible gift, namely a firm conscience born from the forgiveness of sins. Under the authority of the holy and omnipotent God, under which the church stands and will forever stand — if it wants to remain serious Christians — the people and Reich have true support in the authority of this God. And the state has its deepest, strongest, and — from the human standpoint — indestructible roots in the church. With this certainty, the Hanoverian provincial church **affirms our state absolutely**. It believes that this state is the best one possible. The Evangelical Church has always given to the state what is its due. The church gives this state and its Führer what it has, joyfully and without reservation, with a thankful heart.

After thousands had sung “Now Thank We All our God,” District President Stapenhorst spoke in the name of the Prussian government and the Prussian president. The national revolution was total, and wanted to include the whole life of the people; no part of life could remain untouched by the great events of the age. The breakthrough of the new idea of the state wanted to transform the German and his thinking, and teach each individual to sacrifice for the good of the community. The people’s community should be founded on a united religious faith. The church could not remain untouched by the storm of the national uprising. The church must understand the call of the age. Churchmen who understand their people must so transform the church’s structure so that all people’s comrades can feel at home in the church. That great goal would be achieved when one affirmed Hitler’s liberating action, and fought side by side with him for the moral and religious renewal of our people. In this sense, he extended the greetings and best wishes of the Prussian government and its president, and at the same time called for everyone to join in a triple “Sieg Heil” to Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler.

Thousands of arms reached to heaven in the Hitler greeting, and thousands of people’s comrades praised the Führer with a triple “Sieg Heil.” The same thousands spontaneously sang the Horst Wessel song. Then Pastor Hahn-Elmlohe, the leader of the “German Christians” in Hanover, spoke on behalf of the provincial church council. Like many others, he was wearing a brown shirt:

28 August 1933 will go down in the history of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Hanover — if God wills — as the day in which the clear will of the church members affirmed its people in a new way, stating:

**The church stands here** under the cross of Jesus Christ —

**The German people stands there**, which under the symbol of the swastika has awakened.

In past decades, the subversive powers of liberalism, materialism, and Bolshevism alienated millions of German people's comrades from the German nation. It is doubtless God's grace that our Führer Adolf Hitler has once again won back to the nation the German people's comrade and the German worker. Hitler could and had to achieve his goal, because he broke totally from the past and followed the entirely different, yet ancient, path of National Socialism.

In past decades, these satanic powers alienated millions of our German people's comrades from the Evangelical Church. It is the holy duty and solemn goal of our movement of faith, the "German Christians," to win back the German people's comrade and the German worker, with God's help, to the Evangelical Church. To do that, we want to, and must, follow a different, yet ancient path in the church, namely the path of Martin Luther that leads to a deep connection of church and people, of Christianity and German nature.

**The cross of Christ and the swastika should not and may not oppose each other**; they belong together. One must make us look to eternity, and admonish us" Remember that you are a Christian! The other points us toward the present, and admonishes us: Remember that you are a German!

Both together should and do admonish us:

**Remember that you are a German Christian!**



It is, therefore, a holy joy to declare at this hour: **As leader of the religious movement “German Christians” in this provincial church council and as the servant of our Hanoverian provincial church, I confess to you, my dear comrades from the S.A., the S.S., and the Stahlhelm, my thankful joy to God, and I confess my genuine joy in our Führer and Chancellor Adolf Hitler.** Let me say openly: It was you, my comrades, who led the fight against the Satan of Bolshevism, **and who know how things would be if Hitler had not called and if you had not answered.** God, however, blessed our struggle.

As a representative of the church members and also the National Socialists, who will become one with the church members, **I joyfully confess our Lutheran church and the Lord of our church, Christ.**

Our will and desire is that this double confession will become the confession of all. If God the Lord blesses our will and lets it succeed, then — and only then — will that German song have a genuine, deep meaning for us German Christian people, in that moment which we sing to God:

Germany, Germany above everything,  
Above everything in the world!

The solemn ceremony at the Ständehaus ended with the singing of the *Deutschlandlied*. As the formations withdrew with banners waving and the band playing, the members of the provincial church council gathered in the meeting hall of the Ständehaus for the official opening session of the 4th Hanoverian provincial church council.

My task is not to provide minutes of the provincial church council meeting or details of the work of the “German Christians” in this little booklet. A later volume will do that. Here, my goal is to say this to all those who are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Provincial Church in Hanover: **Our church through the provincial church council has affirmed its absolute support for Adolf Hitler’s National Socialist Germany.** That came to clear expression at the opening session.

The platform was filled to overflowing — a sign that church members were excited and expectant. The meeting room had an entirely new appearance, since many representatives appeared in Hitler’s honored brown uniforms (**but only among the “German Christians”**), whereas formerly dark suits were the custom. I can say that, as faction leader of the “German Christians,” I was filled with pride that most of the “German Christians” wore brown shirts to demonstrate:

People and church belong together!

The provincial bishop opened the meeting at 14:45 with a talk in which he mentioned the particular significance of this provincial church council and remembered the work of previous provincial church councils, ending with the following words: “Never has there been a time with as many possibilities as today. Never before has the Evangelical Church faced as seriously as it does today the question of how it will release and develop the life strengths entrusted to it for the state and people. May the church joyfully use its strength to serve the state, which it owes the people, and which the people and fatherland cannot do without. May this be the generation that masters its tasks by God’s grace through its determined will.

He had spoken of this grace to us the previous Sunday. According to the old custom, we now stand and hear the word of God.”

After the Scripture reading, prayer, and promises of the representatives, **Pastor Hahn-Elmlohe was unanimously elected president of the provincial church council.** For the first time in Hanoverian church history, a pastor in a brown shirt was the president of the provincial church council. I was determined that this would not only be for show, but rather to give this even the symbolic significance that corresponds to our will: **Adolf Hitler’s people, those in brown shirts, and the church as a people’s church, belong together!**

This thought and this will dominated the whole meeting, and came to especially clear expression in the speech by representative Pastor Bergholter-Harburg, who in this same meeting of 28 August 1933 called for a new structure for the provincial church council, based on the leadership principle. Among other things, he said:

We of the “German Christian” movement of faith see in this change (from the old structure) the first chance to establish the spirit of leadership within the church. The time of long speeches and convoluted minutes is over. The present day demands active leadership that pursues clear goals with a firm will. The new rhythm of work should and also must be displayed in the work of the provincial church, and I therefore ask that the proposal be accepted without further discussion.

In connection with this proposal, I felt it necessary in this significant hour to lay out several directives to help people understand the new leadership desire, and to say with total clarity what we wanted. It had to do with the **position of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the coming Third Reich.**



The breakthrough of the nation also meant the breakthrough of the church. What we experienced in the past hours is a witness to that fact. Our deepest wish is that this breakthrough will also lead our church to **a march of faith and power** that does not shy away from a fight in its belief in victory. It is our great good fortune and holiest task of our lives that we may join this march! Our goal: **To give the old gospel new strength for young Germany!**

**The old gospel!** It was the sun that formerly shined on our church. It should continue to shine on us, clear and pure. Jesus Christ remains the core and star of our church's proclamation: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow! The whole Bible, the treasure of our church, remains our source. Justification by faith in Luther's sense remains the banner under which we stand. We wish for a new theology that has eyes open for new knowledge from God's creation, which we can include with the terms people, ethnicity, and race. At the same time, we want a theology that remains true to the fundamental confession of our church.

**The old gospel with new strength!** It is not that we want to add something to the divine power of the gospel. However, God's call that rings through our age demands that we put our strength to new and better use for the gospel. It is not the time to criticize those who have lead our church, or not led it. Above all, we do not want to criticize others. We want only to say one thing: as members of our church at a time of upheaval, we feel called to repentance. We have failed in some things. We have often not been deep and brave enough. We often were not close to the gospel, very often not close to the people. Yet as this hour we also need to remember the great and genuine accomplishments our provincial church has had in past ages. We greet the unknown pastor, the unknown church board

member, the unknown church member, who have been loyal and true to the faith. But we also know that such persistence cannot be the decisive strength of our church. We know that we can combat the de-christianizing of our people only with new personal efforts for that which alone can save our people. We therefore want to transform our church into a fighting community of those who are ready to be a brigade of those who are really and truly willing to hear God's command, who despite all human weakness are ready to serve the living Christ in the life of today's people. For us that means: to give the old gospel new strength for young Germany!

A new Germany is beginning to rise from the destruction of the war and the post-war period. We thank God for that. A new type of people is forming. The front soldier, white and blue collar workers, the farmer who remains true to the soil, and the S.A. man, are godfathers at its cradle. The German future belongs to it, if God wills for Germany to have a future. The work of the church, therefore, has first to be with this young Germany. It is not that we want to neglect the work of the church and the blessings of past generations. They have our love. We do not forget where we came from. However, our church is there for all its members. We look over the past to the march into the future. The church should not be a haven for old bourgeois sensibilities. Its task must be to capture the new people.

When times change, it does not always happen smoothly and without personal struggles and pain. The pain that our church struggle has brought, and will yet bring, must be borne. We remember with respect at this hour those who worked conscientiously and successfully in our provincial church under different circumstances, but who because of the

transformation in the church must leave their offices. To name one name among many, the previous chair of the provincial church board, Superintendent D. Schaaf. Our provincial church owes much to him because of his work, and he may be certain that his work is not in vain despite the changed conditions.

**But new tasks demand new leadership!** That is the demand of the hour: God's new tasks demand new forces, also in the church's leadership. The **individual** may be able to unite elements of the old and new eras subjectively within himself. **The leadership of the church, however, must follow a clear line, and without compromise.** Only that can prevent half measures and weakness. The life will of the German nation, driven by bitter need, is today unified by the great German freedom movement. Since the movement that has done that calls loudly and forcefully to the church, the church may not stand on the sidelines and sink into an atmosphere of bourgeois thinking and feeling. God has opened a door for it. It should go through it and give today's German state what it owes the state: **a joyful yes, expressed in action, of cooperation and understanding!** Without giving up our church's internal freedom, we wish a lively support on the part of the church for young Germany for the sake of the gospel and its impact. **The gospel should have its throne in National Socialist thinking and feeling. And National Socialist thinking and feeling should be at home within the church,** so that it can be permeated by the free gospel that is the directing and saving command of God, sovereign over all. Give the old gospel new strength for young Germany!



A few weeks ago, our president proclaimed the word of God at a powerful Gau rally in Harburg, attended by many thousands of brown shirts. Dark thunderclouds hung over the meeting. Heavy showers fell on the city, and the thunder pounded. It was moving when, at the end of the sermon, thousands sung Luther's song: "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." Our wish and our prayer is that the coming Germany learns, whatever threatens it, to stand in the faith that "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," in the confession that "Nothing Comes through Our Strength," and in the confidence that "Although the World with Devils Filled..." That is what we want to fight for!

We welcome in this hour those of our brothers who, although sharing much of the faith with us, have not been able to join us. We honor and respect their beliefs. May all of us who struggle for the right structure of the church stand together in what in the end unites us all: "You have one master, Christ!"

Later in the meeting there was a vote to enable the church senate to make the necessary personnel changes. Pastor Jakob-Hannover, a representative of the "German Christians," spoke along the same lines. He connected Hitler's struggle with our obligations, and said clearly that we always had to put the cause over the person, the great tasks of the people over the interests of the individual. The enabling law was passed in its first and second reading with the overwhelming majority, against the votes of the "Gospel and Church" faction. The provincial church council sent the Reich President, the Reich Chancellor, the Prussian Minister President and Minister of Culture, the Reich Minister of the Interior, and Hitler's agent Military Pastor Müller telegrams of greeting. **That was to us an obvious duty.** It was just as obvious to me that we end the meeting with a three-fold "Sieg Heil" to the Chancellor and

Führer of our people. There were some who took offense, thinking that we should have closed with a prayer. To them I say that he who felt the need to pray to God in his heart — as we all did — had opportunity to do that. We “German Christians” refuse to be instructed by those who, during the years of struggle, were not found at Hitler’s side, but even then saw their job as criticizing and complaining. For us, Christianity consists not in words, but rather in brave, daring action, and we are happy to have God judge us. Therefore, we “German Christians” decided not to give many more or less valuable speeches, but to act, born from our unshakable faith in God, to act in ways that show love for church and people.

### **25 October 1933**

Seldom has a church displayed in so festive a way its commitment to the Führer of the people as did our Hanoverian provincial church in its loyalty mass meeting of 25 October 1933 at the Market Church. It was during that decisive period which Hitler left the League of Nations and had called for a new election on 12 November 1933.

Everyone came at the invitation of the president of the provincial church council: the members of the provincial church council, the church senate, all the church agencies, representatives of the S.S., S.A., and HJ, the Stahlhelm, and representatives of state, provincial, and city agencies, along with many hundreds of faithful from the city and countryside. The flags of the German Reich hung from the towering pillars of the church and preached in their language our desire:

People and church belong together,  
The cross of Christ and the swastika stand beside each other!



Together, we sang the hymn “We Gather Together” and joined in prayer and the word of God. The president then read the decision of the decision of the provincial church council, which had been proposed by the “German Christians”:



The provincial church council unanimously affirms the following decision:

For the sake of our people and in memory of our dead of the World War, the provincial church council of the Evangelical-Lutheran Provincial Church of Hanover welcomes with genuine pleasure the manly deeds of our people's chancellor Adolf Hitler and agrees unanimously that:

We and the church members want to stand courageously and without reservation with the chancellor.

We and the church members want to fight with and work for the National Socialist Germany of Adolf Hitler, not only in words, but also in sacrificial deeds.



We and the church members at this decisive time bring our prayers for the needs of our people before God, asking that he give us holy courage and make us ready for true unity among all German brothers.

We and the church members pray fervently to God that he help those who lead us to carry their burdens.

That is our unshakable and unanimous will, which we in this hour solemnly oath to the chancellor of the German Reich.

At the conclusion of the reading, the provincial bishop spoke serious words for a serious time. The president then introduced the vote with the following words:

As president of the provincial church council, I have called this meeting to put into practice what he promised on 28 August 1933 in the solemn ceremony at the Ständehaus, **namely to always support Adolf Hitler's National Socialist Germany without reservation.** The political events of the recent past have shown clearly that our German people faces a very great decision: a decision that will perhaps determining Germany's future for centuries. One can even say it is a decision between freedom or slavery, existence or nonexistence, the life or death of the German people.

On 14 October, Adolf Hitler, the chancellor of the German Reich, for the sake of Germany's honor and with regard to the great sacrifices in blood and lives over the past 14 years that places on us a holy obligation, and aware of the necessary to have a good conscience as the people's Führer and in total honesty before God and the people, made

**a very great and serious decision about us and our people.**

Although we do not want to conceal the significance of this decision, we **greeted** with genuine joy this manly deed, because we sensed that through this deed that **the unhealthy, destructive bonds that burdened us for the past 14 years were broken**; because we saw that **instead of more or less reliable words from fearful, irresponsible, and unfree people**, finally, finally, **a fearless, responsible, and free man has done a saving act.**

One asks: What will happen?

The other: Is it just?

And that is what separates

The free man from the slave.

The Führer of the people acted according to that principle, and acted in a way that allows him to stand in good conscience at any time before God and the German people that God has entrusted to him. In his readiness to take responsibility, he stands before the people and calls on them to affirm his decision, the decision of the Führer. On 12 November, the German people are to give their approval and thereby express to the world their willingness to sacrifice and their confidence in the Führer.

As president of the provincial church council, I feel obligated by my previous statements to call the representatives of our Hanoverian provincial church together so that the church can solemnly and publicly declare that we

**joyfully affirm that we approve**

the action of the German chancellor. It is a pleasure for me to see that hundreds and hundreds of German people's comrades have come here to be witnesses that the church does not stand aside when the future of the German people is being decided.

We do not need to speak of what that means for our people, of what is at stake for us and for our children. The Reich Chancellor's words have made the seriousness and decisive importance of these days clear to the German people, and the chancellor does not weary of making it clear day after day to the German fatherland. The time for half measures and cowardly lack of responsibility is over. The time of unshakable, responsible, manly action has come. It is time for quarrelling to cease, for all complaining and pessimism to disappear. At this time, we as the church want to prove that we are bound to the people, to stand by our people in godly confidence, to recognize that God's call is sounding through this age.

Who wants to stand to the side?

Who still wants to hesitate and waver?

Who wants to ask "what if" and "but"?

**Half measures do not win freedom and heaven!**

As men of the church and as members of the church, we are conscious of our holy responsibility, and want to proclaim solemnly and publicly

**Chancellor of the Reich**, we of the church speak a forthright yes to your action!

**Führer of the people**, we of the church are ready to sacrifice at your side!

**Hitler**, we of the church support you and your office with the strength of faith, and will not weary of praying for the blessings of the heavenly father, Amen. That means, so let it be!

All at the loyalty mass meeting affirmed it — and to strengthen that affirmation, thousands joined in singing powerfully the Deutschlandlied in this holy space under the cross in a solemn and public way: **Germany, Germany, over everything, over everything in the world!**

As the last stanza echoed, the president spoke to everyone present:

“Now I ask all those gathered in this house of God who are not members of the provincial church council the question of whether they want to join with us as members of the church. I ask you all to rise and proclaim: Will you with pious confidence and faithful prayer, loyally and with readiness to sacrifice, stand with our Chancellor Adolf Hitler? Everyone together say “Yes!”

As one man speaking from a single mouth, the answer was a loud “Yes!” To affirm it, the powerful hymn sounded out:

**A Mighty Fortress is our God!**

**Luther’s song and the Deutschlandlied —**

They should be in harmony!

**Church and people —**

They should stand together inseparably in joy and sorrow, in death and need!

**The cross of Christ and the swastika —**

They should and must stand alongside each other!

**HAIL VICTORY!**